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Chairman: Mr. Effah-Apenteng ..... (Ghana)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 123: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*) (A/56/6 and Corr.1, Introduction and Expenditure sections 1 to 33 and Income sections 1 to 3, A/56/7 and A/56/16)

1. **Mr. Valdés** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Rio Group, said that it was incumbent upon Member States to determine the political and financial aspects of the proposed programme budget in such a way as to achieve a balanced distribution of resources between the various priorities.

2. The Rio Group expressed its satisfaction at the timely submission of the proposed programme budget. While he welcomed the clarity with which the different sections were set out, he noted that the presentation according to a results-based format could be improved, and he invited the Secretariat to take the necessary measures to that end. The Group also considered as a positive development the inclusion in the proposed programme budget of expenditures related to special political missions.

3. He drew attention to the increase in the number of D-1 and higher posts and said that, as the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) noted in paragraph 48 of its report, career prospects could not normally be handled through the reclassification of posts.

4. The Rio Group regretted that the Development Account estimates for the next biennium remained at $13,065,000, the same level as in 1998-1999. It also regretted the low level of expenditure in that section of the budget in the two previous bienniums and urged the Secretariat to implement fully those projects that remained pending.

5. **Mr. Cordeiro** (Brazil) said that his delegation endorsed the statements made by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Rio Group. His delegation believed that adoption of a results-based budget format would contribute to the improvement of the budgetary process, the outputs of the different programmes and, ultimately, the efficiency of the Organization.

6. His delegation regretted, however, that many of the objectives and expected accomplishments were too vague, but it believed that the proposal was a step in the right direction. His delegation concurred with the view expressed by ACABQ that as experience was gained it should be possible to refine the results-based budget tools.

7. His delegation welcomed the increased resources allocated to priority areas such as the coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts, but regretted that those requested for the promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development had increased by only 1.7 per cent, the lowest growth rate of all. It was important to ensure that United Nations programmes and activities in that area were adequately funded.

8. In his delegation's view, the debate on the proposed programme budget should have two objectives: to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated to the Organization's priority activities as established by the General Assembly, and to approve a budget document that would help to increase efficiency, rationalize programmes and activities and strengthen control over expenditures.

9. The efficiency measures taken by the Secretary-General and, in particular, investments in information technology had certainly resulted in increased productivity, but further improvements were necessary. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that information on the progress and impact of information technology was emerging as an important tool for managing the Organization's activities, and it believed that full use should be made of technological innovations such as video-conferencing techniques, the Integrated Management Information system (IMIS) and other modern means of communication.

10. The fact remained that the General Assembly must provide the Organization with the resources necessary for it to implement its mandate. The Secretary-General had been right when he had said that there were limits to cuts in expenditures and that it was not possible to do more with less indefinitely. The adoption of the programme budget must therefore be preceded by a thorough examination of the allocation of resources within and between programmes in order to ensure that the funds available were used to finance priority programmes.

11. Personnel matters were of particular importance in a budget where almost 80 per cent of the resources were spent on salaries and other staff costs. His delegation concurred with the view expressed by the

Advisory Committee that any request for reclassification should be justified by a detailed description of the way in which the nature or scope of the activities related to the post had changed and should not be motivated by the need to enhance the prospects for recruitment or to provide a promotion for the incumbent. Requests for reclassification should not have the effect of increasing the distortions in a Secretariat which was already top-heavy and where the average age was high.

12. His delegation attached particular importance to sections 9 (Economic and social affairs), 11A (Trade and development) and 19 (Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean), as well as programmes and activities related to poverty eradication. It also attached great importance to the allocation of adequate resources in the regular budget to finance the activities of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and for information services in the Portuguese language.

13. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that his delegation wholeheartedly supported the reform programme introduced by the Secretary-General and noted that it was already beginning to bear fruit. It fully endorsed the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

14. It was reassuring that, at the moment when the Organization and its Secretary-General had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, it seemed that the financial situation should finally improve. Given the important role it played in peacekeeping, in particular, it was vital that the Organization should have a solid foundation and the financial flexibility it needed in order to achieve its objectives. That presupposed, inter alia, that Member States would pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions, it being understood that the difficult situations that some countries, particularly developing countries, might encounter must be taken into account.

15. The maintenance of the regular budget at the same level for eight years had forced the Organization to resort to drastic cost-cutting measures in order to absorb ever-increasing expenditure, a situation that had adversely affected the implementation of certain mandated activities and had led to the elimination of many others. In that connection, the Secretary-General indicated in his report on improving the financial situation of the United Nations (A/56/464) that, besides inflation and exchange rate fluctuations, additional services requested by Member States had been a factor in the increase in expenditure.

16. His delegation believed that the Organization must have the budget appropriations necessary fully to discharge its mandates and to implement approved programmes. In that regard, it was concerned about the excessive use of extrabudgetary resources. The Organization should not become too dependent on those resources, and mandated activities should be financed to a large extent from the regular budget.

17. His delegation was pleased to note that an amount of $93.7 million had been provided in the budget for special political missions, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/233. Noting with satisfaction that the budget documents had been submitted earlier than usual, he emphasized that, in conformity with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, all documents should be made available to Member States within the prescribed time limits.

18. His delegation noted the new results-based presentation of the budget and considered that the Secretariat should take into account the provisions of resolution 55/231 in its next presentation. He took note of the Advisory Committee's observation that, in numerous cases, the formulation of objectives and expected accomplishments was too vague, a point that had also been made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

19. Indicators of achievement, which were an important part of the planning process, should be formulated as clearly as possible, taking fully into account the provisions of the medium-term plan, which remained the main tool on the basis of which the proposed programme budget should be established and, as such, should be scrupulously respected. Some expenditure sections, however, did not take fully into account the directives contained in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005. The next proposed programme budget must be prepared in complete conformity with the plan.

20. The human element played a very important role in the functioning of the Organization, since 70 per cent of the resources requested served to cover staff costs. His delegation considered that the implementation of resolution 55/258 would result in marked improvements in human resources management

in the areas on which the Assembly had been able to reach a decision. It awaited with interest the reports requested from the Secretariat so as to be able to move ahead with the consideration of the matters left pending.

21. Adequate resources must be allocated to the priority areas identified in the medium-term plan and in the resolution on the budget outline, particularly the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of sustained economic growth, the development of Africa, the promotion of human rights, the coordination of humanitarian assistance, the promotion of justice and international law, disarmament, drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism. His delegation wished especially to call attention to the development of Africa, a continent that was ravaged by conflicts and was experiencing huge economic and social problems further exacerbated by the effects of globalization.

22. Morocco, which was participating in United Nations activities for the maintenance of international peace and security, would consider very carefully the budget implications of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (the Brahimi report) and would spare no effort to ensure that adequate resources were allocated for the implementation of the recommendations contained therein. He wished to assure the Secretary-General that his delegation had taken note of the appeal he had made in that regard.

23. His delegation also looked forward with interest to the reports to be submitted by the Secretariat on the security of United Nations staff, an issue to which it accorded special and constant attention.

24. **Mr. Al-Mansour** (Kuwait), endorsing the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, reaffirmed the importance which his delegation attached to the medium-term plan. That document translated the overall policy of the Organization into programmes and activities which had to be taken into account in the preparation of the programme budget. He emphasized the close link between the proposed programme budget and the timely and unconditional payment by Member States of their contributions as approved by the General Assembly.

25. His delegation attached particular importance to the implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 53/221 and 55/258 which dealt with the delegation of authority. The responsibilities and duties that might be delegated should be precisely defined before such delegation took place. Internal control measures and measures for the control of procedures were also essential.

26. Public information activities which made the work of the United Nations better known were also very important, particularly in current circumstances. In that connection, his delegation emphasized the value of modern technologies but considered that radio broadcasting still had a major part to play in many regions of the world.

27. His delegation felt that it was very important to provide adequate resources to the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which played a major role in the region. Although a little progress had been made, the Commission still had a large number of vacancies and efforts should be made to fill them. With respect to human resources management in general, his delegation emphasized that the principle of equitable geographical distribution must be respected and it hoped that efforts would be made to improve the recruitment of nationals of underrepresented and unrepresented States. Furthermore, high-level posts should not be reserved for a small number of States; an appropriate proportion of nationals from developing countries should be appointed to such posts.

28. **Ms. Jarbussynova** (Kazakhstan) expressed appreciation of the Secretariat's efforts in preparing the first proposed programme budget in a results-based format, the aim of which was to strengthen the link between the objectives of the medium-term plan and budgetary resources. Since the biennium 1995-1996, the United Nations budget had not increased, while the activities required of the Organization had constantly grown: her delegation considered that further budgetary constraints could not be regarded as useful or opportune. It shared the concern of the Secretary-General about the pressure to "do more with less", as well as his anxiety that that situation might have an adverse impact on the quality of the work. In the interests of efficiency, it was important strictly to respect the objectives of the medium-term plan and to allocate the available resources properly between numerous priority areas. Her delegation fully supported, in particular, an increase in the resources earmarked for economic growth and sustainable development, international justice and international

law, political affairs, international cooperation for development and the development of Africa.

29. The results-based budget had shifted the focus from a quantitative one based on resources to a qualitative one based on expected accomplishments. The indicators that were being used for the first time in the budgetary process should provide a means not only of measuring the implementation of legislative mandates but also of determining the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Organization. Continued investment in information technology would ensure increased efficiency and organizational transparency. Her delegation shared the view of the Advisory Committee that the objectives and expected accomplishments were too vaguely defined and that the terms used should be defined more precisely. Nevertheless, the new proposed programme budget should be a step towards the implementation of the tasks set out in the Millennium Declaration.

30. **Mr. dos Santos** (Mozambique), speaking on behalf of the African Group, commended the quality of the first results-based proposed programme budget and considered that it would enable the Organization to carry out its mandate, and particularly to attain the objectives of the Millennium Declaration, provided that the necessary funds were made available.

31. The African Group attached importance to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects which the international community had adopted by consensus the previous July. The Department for Disarmament Affairs had a central role to play in the implementation of the Programme of Action by assisting Member States to take the numerous measures proposed at the national, regional and global levels. It was, inter alia, called upon to develop capacity for specialist training on small arms stockpile management and security, to collate and circulate information provided by States on a voluntary basis on the implementation of the Programme of Action, to provide the secretariat for the biennial meetings to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action, and to provide support for a study on the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace in a timely and reliable manner illicit small arms and light weapons. Given the magnitude of the task assigned to the Department, which was the smallest in the Secretariat, the African Group fully endorsed the proposed modest increases in its resources. It considered that the implementation of the Programme of Action would be a major step in ensuring peace and stability, economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty in Africa, in accordance with the approach taken by African leaders in the New Africa Initiative.

32. In conclusion, he said that, with the necessary political will, the Member States would be able to approve a programme budget that would guarantee the implementation of the objectives of the Millennium Declaration, which set the priorities for United Nations action throughout the world.

33. **Mr. Adam** (Israel) said that his delegation concurred with the list of priorities for the biennium 2002-2003, which were in line with those specified by the General Assembly in resolution 55/233, but felt that more resources should be allocated to the promotion of sustainable development and sustained economic growth, the maintenance of international peace and security, combating terrorism and economic and social development. Funding must be secured for projects designed to address the digital divide, threats such as famine and disease, particularly in Africa, and programmes relating to the environment, on the threshold of the Johannesburg Conference. Israel also supported the strengthening of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, with a view to enhancing gender equality at the United Nations, especially in peacekeeping operations.

34. More attention should be given to international peace and security, by enhancing peace-building activities and promoting tolerance and good neighbourliness. Israel attached great importance to the Brahimi Report and the recommendations of the panel on United Nations peacekeeping operations, and would like to see improvements in the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, along with a comprehensive review of the structure, recruitment methods and personnel of the department, as described in paragraph 10 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget (A/56/6). In the light of recent events, it was necessary to enhance programmes aimed at fighting terrorism, and to increase the budget and the number of posts allocated for the maintenance of security for the Secretariat and members of delegations. Israel was also in favour of strengthening the Department for Disarmament Affairs, whose

workload had grown in recent years. It commended the work done in the field of administration of justice, and supported the proposal to increase the workforce of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the Joint Appeals Board.

35. In view of the precarious financial situation of the Organization, Member States should take a close interest in the initiatives taken by the Secretariat to limit the growth of the budget and should find ways of reallocating resources and posts among sections and programmes, in order to adopt a budget which reflected their needs and priorities without having to increase resources.

36. **Mr. Kulyk** (Ukraine) emphasized that in any redistribution of resources among the various activities, the main consideration should be to ensure full, effective and efficient delivery of programmes, while respecting the priorities laid down by Member States.

37. His delegation welcomed the fact that provision had been made for funding special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs). At the same time, it was concerned at the apparent lack of progress in applying efficiency measures throughout the Secretariat and hoped that the painstaking negotiations in the Committee on the modalities for operating the Development Account had not been in vain.

38. He welcomed the presentation of the proposed programme budget in a results-based format, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/231. However, he agreed with the Advisory Committee that that method needed continuous refinement.

39. As for the staffing structure, his delegation shared the concern voiced by others over the top-heaviness of the staff pyramid. Requests for reclassification were not always justified. Reclassification should not be used as a tool for promoting the incumbent of a post. The ongoing reform of human resources management and the gradual changes in the system for recruiting staff introduced by General Assembly resolution 55/258 should enable the Secretariat to exercise proper vacancy management and attract the best qualified staff.

40. As for the content of the programmes, his delegation supported the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination with regard to the narrative parts of the proposed programme budget. It regretted that the Committee had not been able to appraise the human rights programme and hoped that there would be a constructive review of that complex issue in the Fifth Committee.

41. In an organization the size of the United Nations, oversight was a crucial tool for improving management, preventing fraud and evaluating programme delivery. For that reason, Ukraine supported the strengthening of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. He expressed the hope that the Fifth Committee would not be required, as it had been in 1999, to make a decision on new elements in the programme budget which had not been presented under established procedures and said that his delegation looked forward to participating actively in transparent and constructive negotiations.

42. **Mr. Mustafa** (Sudan) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Discussion of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 was especially significant, since it was the first budget to be drawn up using the results-based method. Because of the experimental character of that method, it could be assumed that caution would be exercised and that care would be taken not to place undue emphasis on results to the detriment of objectives, an approach which might end up in a blind alley if the desired results were not achieved. The Committee must satisfy itself that the priorities laid down in the initial proposed programme budget, based on the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, were in line with those adopted at the Millennium Summit, and that there were no plans to finance activities which had not been approved.

43. His delegation, like many others, considered that the services of consultants and experts should not be financed from extrabudgetary funds and that recruitment, including recruitment to specialized agencies, should comply with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The computerization of the Organization should continue and provision should be made for the requisite appropriations to finance the various items of expenditure (training, maintenance, etc.) needed to carry out the strategy adopted, for which a separate budget ought perhaps to be established.

44. Tight control should be kept on expenditure and due heed should be paid to evaluation, so as to avoid

duplication and enable the Organization to function more efficiently and more economically.

45. **Mr. Barabandy** (Syrian Arab Republic) unreservedly endorsed the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Although the proposed programme budget had to reflect the medium-term plan, it was plain that that rule had not been respected in all sections; he asked the Secretariat to correct that in future proposed budgets. It was particularly surprising that resources were not always distributed according to priorities. The requisite resources ought to be allocated to the important fields of economic growth, international economic cooperation, the development of Africa, the activities of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and the Department of Public Information, and those of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and programmes to assist refugees from Palestine.

46. While his delegation supported the measures proposed by the Secretary-General with a view to taking full advantage of information and communication technologies, it was essential to continue to use traditional methods of information in the developing countries, so as to preserve the universal nature of the Organization. Given that a substantial proportion of the surfers who visited the United Nations web site were looking for employment with the Organization, he wondered whether the Department of Public Information was able to convey the Organization's message via that medium. Too much emphasis was placed on the need to cut back the budget of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and to rely more on web sites, where English was gaining ground to the detriment of the other official languages, thereby tending to whittle away the linguistic and cultural diversity that was one of the Organization's assets. On the contrary, conference services should be allocated all the resources they needed in all duty stations and the Department of Public Information should be given the means to pursue its pilot project on radio broadcasts, taking care to ensure that the six official languages received equal treatment. Similarly, ESCWA should be provided with sufficient resources to ensure that all its publications could appear in Arabic. His delegation concurred in that respect with the comments and recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in its report, especially in paragraph 242.

47. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East should also be given the funds it needed to operate in very difficult circumstances. Although the Organization's financial stability had to be guaranteed and the requisite resources had to be made available to it so that it could meet both the challenges of globalization and the objectives set at the Millennium Summit, the growing importance of extrabudgetary funds was a matter of concern. His delegation was against any artificial ceiling being placed on appropriations.

48. **Mr. Khalifa** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) supported the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 was the first to have been drawn up using the results-based budgeting format, which had been approved by the General Assembly in resolution 55/231. In order to make that tool more useful for Member States, the objectives, expected accomplishments and external factors ought to be defined more precisely in future proposed programme budgets, as the Committee for Programme and Coordination had requested.

49. It was regrettable that some sections did not take due account of the priorities set by Member States in the medium-term plan. The distribution of resources among the various sections had to be fair and consistent with those priorities. The requisite resources should be allotted to economic and social development programmes in order to assist the least developed countries, especially those in Africa, to meet the challenge of globalization and to alleviate poverty and unemployment. Support should be given to the oversight bodies which, by detecting shortcomings, helped to improve the financial and administrative management of the Organization.

50. Placing an artificial ceiling on appropriations could only undermine the implementation of activities and programmes which had been approved. Those activities and programmes must be financed from the regular budget, in other words from the contributions of all Member States, and not from extrabudgetary funds. The United Nations should also be allowed enough flexibility in the budget so that it could cope with serious unexpected events such as the acts of

terrorism committed in the United States on 11 September 2001.

51. Since the Organization had only limited resources to finance a host of needs, an effort had to be made to rationalize and complete the reform programme drawn up by the Secretary-General. His delegation shared the stance adopted by many delegations that the reclassification of posts should be governed by objective criteria. It was worrying that some Member States, above all developing countries, were still underrepresented or unrepresented; the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be properly applied. Lastly, all Member States should honour their financial obligations unconditionally so that the United Nations could fulfil its mandate.

52. **Mr. Kahende** (Kenya) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He noted with appreciation that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 was the first to be based on the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and the first to be prepared using the results-based budgeting format. He paid tribute to the Secretary-General who, by skilful management, had been able to submit a budget reflecting virtually the same level of resources as that for the biennium 2000-2001, with a real resource reduction limited to 0.5 per cent.

53. His delegation noted with appreciation that the New Agenda for the Development of Africa was regarded as one of the priority areas for which the Secretary-General was calling for an increase of resources. That proposal was in fact in line with the decisions taken by the international community at the Millennium Summit, specifically section VII of General Assembly resolution 55/2 on meeting the special needs of Africa. Recalling the measures set out in the Millennium Declaration for achieving sustainable development in Africa and eradicating poverty there, together with the New Africa Initiative which made poverty reduction a priority, Kenya unreservedly supported the increase in funding called for by the Secretary-General under section 10 as the best way of eventually reducing the heavy budget for peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance.

54. As the only developing country to host a United Nations duty station, Kenya also supported the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen that Office. As table 27 G.2 of the budget estimates showed, it was proposed to increase by 9.7 per cent, or $979,500, the budget requirements of the Division of Administrative Services of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. However, at the same time, extrabudgetary funding was expected to fall by $1.3 million. The activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Habitat were funded predominantly by extrabudgetary resources, which served to reimburse the Office for the services it provided to them. Being increasingly reliant on those funds for financing their core activities, the two bodies had experienced serious financial difficulties in the 1990s, which explained why their ability to plan and manage had deteriorated. It would therefore be necessary to increase funding from the regular budget to finance them in order to enable them to plan their activities better and better fulfil their mandates.

55. **Mr. Laptenok** (Belarus) said that his delegation supported the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the allocation of resources among the various sections of the proposed programme budget, which should be entirely in accordance with the priorities established in the medium-term plan. It associated itself with those delegations which had emphasized in that connection that priorities could be altered only on the express request of Member States. It also shared the opinion of other delegations which wanted to see an increase in the resources for the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the development of developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

56. In a zero-growth programme budget, amounting to $2.6 billion, extrabudgetary funds were an important source of financing. Nevertheless, the level of such funds compared with that of budgetary funds was cause for concern. For all activities to be financed appropriately, it would be necessary to establish a mechanism which, in the event of extrabudgetary funds being received for a particular programme, would enable regular budget funds allocated to that programme to be diverted to other activities benefiting from less generous extrabudgetary funding or even not benefiting from such funding at all. It was essential that the contribution of extrabudgetary funds should not introduce distortions in the order of priority prescribed by the General Assembly for activities which were mainly financed from the regular budget.

57. His delegation welcomed the move to results-based budgeting. Noting that 80 per cent of the Organization's resources went on administrative and staff costs, it hoped that the new approach would help to improve personnel management. There was still a long way to go before all the possibilities for achieving savings had been exhausted, and it was important not to slacken in that endeavour. The best way of enhancing the efficiency of the Secretariat was to renew the personnel, calling on highly qualified civil servants chosen from among candidates presented by Member States, with due respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution. For new priorities and programmes, the candidates recruited should have the desired skills. It would then be possible to save some of the substantial amount currently devoted to staff training, which was a luxury the Organization, with the budget it had, could, unfortunately, not allow itself. The fact that external experts and consultants were still called upon showed that the staff's ability to adapt to changing priorities fell short of needs, and that it would be useful to recruit by competitive examination. Also, in cases where experts and consultants were used, the principle of equitable geographical distribution must be respected. The same principle should be applied in filling high-level posts. As to reclassification of posts, he shared the view of most delegations that it was a practice which would eventually produce a top-heavy pyramid.

58. In conclusion, he said that in recent years Belarus had been among the first Member States to pay its contribution to the regular budget of the Organization and the budget of the international tribunals, and that it had fully repaid its debt for peacekeeping operations for the period since 1996.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.